HARRY CALLAHAN: PHOTOGRAPHS
Through December 31, 1983

Harry Callahan (b. 1912), one of the most important and influential American photographers of the mid-20th century, is known for his innovative photographs of subjects from his everyday life--his wife and daughter, the cities where he has lived, the details of landscape close at hand. Twenty-one of these photographs, selected to illustrate high points in his career over the past forty years, are on exhibit at The Cleveland Museum of Art through December 31, 1983. Callahan's inventive approach to black and white photography is demonstrated in prints dating from 1941 to 1972, while recent prints represent his work with color, his principal interest since 1977.

Callahan's method of working often involves photographing favorite subjects repeatedly, attempting to explore all the possibilities inherent in a particular theme, such as the Cape Cod series of beach scenes in this exhibition. Not satisfied with a literal interpretation of things, he seeks, as he has said, "to reveal the subject in a new way to intensify it." Eliminating all nonessential elements, he arrives at a clear and simple image that often verges on abstraction, as seen in his photographs of wires against a clear sky, trees, grasses, and building fronts. Emphasis in these beautifully printed images is on light, pattern, texture, form, and space. Critics have described his work as graceful and subtle, yet full of force.

Callahan, who now lives in Providence, Rhode Island, was born in Detroit. He took up photography as a hobby in 1938, deciding to make it his career in 1941 after meeting Ansel Adams and viewing his prints at a meeting of the Detroit

(more)

Photo Guild. For several years he worked as a processor in the photo laboratories of the General Motors Corporation. In 1946 he was invited to teach photography at Chicago's Institute of Design, and three years later was put in charge of its photography department. He left the Institute in 1961 to head the department of photography at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, where he taught until his retirement in 1977.

Callahan's work has been shown in numerous exhibitions, many organized by the celebrated photographer Edward Steichen when he was director of the photography department at The Museum of Modern Art. A major retrospective exhibition of Callahan's work was shown at The Museum of Modern Art in 1976. Callahan has been awarded fellowship grants from the Graham Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation, enabling him to photograph and travel throughout Europe and South America.

The photographs in this exhibition, selected by Tom E. Hinson, curator of contemporary art at The Cleveland Museum of Art, were lent by Harry Callahan and the Edwynn Houk Gallery, Chicago. The exhibition is installed in Gallery D, the photography gallery on the Museum's ground level.

# # #

For additional information, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.